

18307/P

82441

*James Hunter Esq
with the Author's best regards.*

AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
TOPOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, AND PRESENT STATE
OF THE
TOWN OF TORQUAY (DEVONSHIRE),
WITH REFERENCE, PARTICULARLY, TO ITS SUITABLENESS AS
A PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR INVALIDS.

By JOHN COLDSTREAM, M. D.

(From the Edin. Med. and Surg. Journal, No. 117.)



MATERIALS for the following account were collected during a residence in Torquay, from the end of October 1832 till the middle of April 1833; and they have been brought together for publication, under the conviction that a more particular description than has yet appeared is wanting, to enable medical practitioners to estimate aright the true importance, as a remedial measure, of a prolonged residence at this place. The following notices can be considered only as contributions towards such a description; for more extended researches and observations than have yet been made are required, before the characters of the locality, especially as regards its climate, can be given with precision.

Torquay is situated around a small cove at the north-west angle of Torbay, opening to the south-west. The cove runs inland about 250 yards, and is about 200 yards wide. From its mouth, almost the whole of Torbay is visible. Berryhead, the south-western boundary of the bay, bears by compass SSE. distant nearly six miles. Between the points of south south-east and south-east by east, a part of the British Channel is seen. In every other direction, the horizon is bounded by land. To the south-west the nearest land is Rondham Head, about three miles off. Westwards at the distance of a few hundred yards, is the shelving beach of Tor Abbey, between which, and

Berry-Head, the shores of the bay are formed by low hills of various elevations (none exceeding 500 feet), for the most part cultivated to their summits, and adorned with orchards and hedge-rows, presenting a scene of singular beauty and richness. Landwards, from the same point of view, the horizon is bounded by the heights immediately surrounding the cove of Torquay. These heights are three in number, nearly equal in elevation, (180 to 200 feet) and similar in general features. Between them run two tortuous valleys, one towards the east, the other towards the north. It is on the shores of the cove, along the slopes of the hills, and in the gorges of the valleys, that the town is built.

The three small *hills* rising from the sides of the cove are, in some places, steep, almost precipitous; in other places their declivities are gentle. Their summits are crowned with woods of fir, from twenty to sixty years old. That which bounds the head of the cove (Braddon Hill) is the western extremity of a great mass of high land, the highest in the neighbourhood, whose general axis lies nearly east and west, running on towards the sea-cliffs of Babbicombe and Petit Tor, between two and three miles from Torquay. The highest point of this land, (which is not more than a quarter of a mile from the shore of the cove) I guess to be elevated about 250 feet. It is under cultivation. All the hills are composed of limestone. In several places the strata are well exposed by artificial sections. From these it appears that the general dip of the strata is to the south-west, at an angle of about 40° ; but on the sea-shore the strata are almost vertical. They contain, in common with most of the limestones in this quarter, abundance of the fossil remains of madreporites, astreites, encrinites, and several shells. Immediately to the south-west of Waldon Hill, (which rises on the northwest side of the cove) a considerable extent of the shores of the bay is formed by new red sandstone, in nearly horizontal strata; and at Meadfoot Bay, (one mile east from the cove) the limestone rests upon an argillaceous slate and old red sandstone, dipping to the south.

The *valleys* are narrow, somewhat tortuous, and rise with a gradual ascent from the shores of the cove. That to the east terminates in an elevation of about 140 feet, nearly a mile from Torquay. The water-courses are small. There is very little marshy ground in either valley; and, perhaps, not more than twenty acres of arable land in both. A few large trees grow in that to the east, and shelter some houses that would otherwise be much exposed to the east wind.

The *soil* almost every where around the cove is a rich clayey loam, of the same reddish colour as that of other parts of South

Devon. In some places it is of uniform quality for eight or ten feet below the surface.

Vegetation is luxuriant; a stranger is particularly struck with the large and strong growth of the evergreens.

The following plants are so abundant, that they may be said to characterize the district.

Arum maculatum,
Clematis vitalba,
Cotyledon umbilicus,
Crithmum maritimum,
Epilobium hirsutum,
Euphorbia Portlandica,
Hedera helix,
Hippuris vulgaris,
Hypericum perforatum,

Iris foetidissima,
Ligustrum vulgare,
Lythrum salicaria,
Ophrys apifera,
Rubia peregrina,
Smyrnum olusatrum,
Spiræa filipendula,
Ulex Europæus.

In common with the whole region of South Devon, the neighbourhood of Torquay is very rich in fine mosses and lichens. In 1833, on the 7th of February, snow-drops and crocuses were in full blow in the gardens, and *Ficaria ranunculoides* appeared in the meadows; on the 19th of February, the catkins of the willow were in perfection; and on the 27th, daffodils and the perennial mercury. The following plants are considered, in the gardens around Torquay, as hardy exotics, and usually are allowed to remain in the open border during winter.

Azalea Indica,
Aster Capensis,
Agave Americana,
Bignonia Pandoræ,
Cactus speciosus,
Calceolaria plantaginea,
————— corymbosa,
Cassia Capensis,
Citrus medicus,
Coronilla glauca,
Dracocephalum Canariense,
Fuchsia coccinea,

Magnolia conspicua,
Mespilus Japonica,
Myrtus communis,
Laurus camphora,
Metrosideros floribunda,
Pœonia arborea,
Punica granatum,
Salvia purpurea,
Verbena malendris,
Yucca aloifolia,
Yucca gloriosa.

The greatest extent of *cultivated soil* in the immediate vicinity of Torquay is on the slopes and summit of the high land behind Braddon's Hill. This, although it be under the same bad system of husbandry as is generally pursued in Devonshire, bears rich crops of all kinds. Forty bushels of wheat per acre are sometimes obtained, and thirty bushels form an average crop.

Water is conveyed to the town in pipes from two sources; one of which is an open reservoir in the eastern valley; the other, an enclosed spring near the summit of Braddon's Hill. The water holds much lime and some iron in solution; so that many of the inhabitants collect and use rain-water for domestic purposes. There are several *springs* in the neighbourhood; none very abundant, or otherwise remarkable. The temperatures of some of these vary a little, according to the temperature of the atmosphere. But one spring is very steadily at 52° Fahr.

and was so even during the coldest weather of the season, (1832–33,) when the temperature of the air ranged from 29° to 47° for eight days, and was 42° at the time of observation. This spring issues from the base of Waldon Hill, between high and low water-mark, at Tor Abbey Sands.

Two very small *streamlets* empty themselves into the cove,—one from the eastern, the other from the northern valley. The courses of these through the town are concealed by mason-work.

At high water, *the sea* runs up the cove of Torquay to a quay situated about 240 yards from its mouth. At this quay, there is a depth of six or eight feet. Low water-mark of spring-tides is just at the mouth of the cove. The whole rise of the highest tides is about twenty feet. The greater part of the bottom of the cove is muddy, particularly seawards; other parts are gravelly. The common-sewers of the town empty themselves into the harbour; and the filth which they bring down frequently remains scattered over the bottom at the recess of the tide. This is particularly the case when there is little water in the streams flowing into the cove. In summer, it is said, disagreeable odours are perceptible on the quays all around the harbour. But this evil is likely soon to be remedied. Almost all the shore is occupied by substantial stone quays; but, at the west side of the mouth, there is a small extent of natural beach, which is sandy. The mouth of the harbour opens towards the west, and is flanked by two piers; one of which completely shelters it from the south-west. Outside of the harbour, the depth of water increases gradually towards the mouth of the bay; but within a hundred yards of the shore, vessels can ride in safety. As the cove is open only to the west, in which direction the beach is scarcely more than two furlongs distant, its surface is but little agitated even by the most violent gales. It is only when such occur (perhaps three or four times in the course of the winter,) that any spray rises from the waves in the cove; and even outside of the cove, there is very seldom a heavy sea. The east and south-east are the only winds which raise much wave in Torbay, and from these the neighbourhood of the cove of Torquay is sheltered by the adjacent promontories, and by that of Hope's Naze on the north of Meadfoot Bay.

The surface of the land immediately around Torquay, and indeed the whole region between the rivers Dart and Teign, (about eleven miles in length, by seven in breadth,) is hilly, but few of the elevations exceed 300 feet; the ascents are frequently abrupt, and even precipitous; but, in general, the declivity is sufficiently gentle to admit of the soil being cultivated. The vales are narrow; there is a paucity of water-courses, and very little marshy ground. The subjacent rocks are chiefly of limestone and red sandstone; the former to the north and east, the

latter to the south and west of Torquay. Much of the limestone is highly crystalline, and is wrought extensively as marble. It contains some large caverns, of which that named Kent's Cave, about a mile to the east of Torquay, is the largest that has been explored. It is about 600 feet in height, from three to thirty feet in breadth, and four to twenty in height. From its floor bones have been dug similar to those found in the caverns of Yorkshire and other districts. There is little water in this cave. The temperature of a deep pool at its furthest extremity was 52° in the end of March.

The *scenery* met with in traversing this fine country is very beautiful, and, in consequence of the great number of small elevations, very varied within short distances. In some directions, it is scarcely possible to advance even a few yards without perceiving some new feature in the landscape, or having its character suddenly and entirely changed. This is particularly the case about the cove of Torquay itself.

Everywhere in this district *vegetation* is vigorous. In many of the vallies, there are large orchards. All kinds of crop are raised; but a smaller proportion of turnip than elsewhere, on account of its having been found that that crop is particularly liable to suffer from the ravages of the turnip-fly around Torbay. It is said that almost every species of phenogamous plant hitherto found in Britain may be obtained within the bounds of Devonshire; and of these, a large proportion grow around Torquay. Marine vegetation is no less rich and varied than that of the land. Almost all the British Algæ have been found in Torbay,—many species seem to be peculiar to the locality,—and others occur in greater beauty than they do elsewhere; * but allowance must be made for the assiduity with which the productions of the bay have been investigated by one of the most ardent of British naturalists, Mrs Griffiths, who has long resided at Torquay.

Neither the terrestrial nor the aquatic *animals* of this district present any peculiarity calculated to fix the attention of the medical topographer. It may be mentioned, however, that poisonous reptiles are not unknown. In summer, the adder is occasionally seen upon dry banks, chiefly near the summits of the low hills. The smaller birds of prey are rather abundant. The green woodpecker also haunts the fir plantations around the cove. Sole and turbot, hake, bream, dory, and mullet, are, along with mackarel and whiting, the common fish of the markets. Oysters are abundant and good. Torbay has long been known as the locality of many molluscous animals and zoophytes, scarcely to be met with on other shores of this island; and.

* *Chondrus crispus*, from which so excellent a demulcent mucilage may be prepared, grows abundantly on the littoral rocks, near Torquay.

many of the more common species occur here in great beauty, owing, perhaps, to their being so well sheltered from the effects of storms. All the shells of the genera *Pholas*, *Hiatella*, *Sphenia*, &c. which burrow in the rocks, are plentiful, and, along with the following common mollusca, crabs and zoophytes, tend to characterize the shores.

Sepia officinalis,
Aplysia depilans,
Eolida papillosa,
Donax trunculus,
Cardium aculeatum,
 ——— tuberculatum,
Patella vulgata,
Trochus crassus,
 ——— zizyphinus,
Turbo rudis,
Murex erinaceus,

Pleurobranchus plumula,
Porcellana platycheles,
Portunus puber,
Galathea strigosa,
Holothuria dissimilis,
Asterias aurantiaca,
Actinea sulcata,
Jania rubens,
Spongia sanguinea,
Flustra avicularis,
Serialaria lendigera,

besides many others which are common to most parts of the British coast.

The nearest range of the Dartmoor hills is about fifteen miles from Torbay; their outline viewed from the south and east is rather smooth. Torquay is twenty-three miles from Exeter, and thirty-three from Plymouth. The nearest market town is Newton, seven miles distant. There is no considerable village near Torquay, excepting Tor, or Tormohun, less than a mile to the north-west. It contains about 800 inhabitants. Its site is elevated sixty or seventy feet above the sea level. Most parts of it are partially sheltered by rising grounds, or by large trees, from the direct action of the prevailing winds. The small vallies of Upton and Westhill, to the north-west of Tor, are, perhaps, more completely and more immediately surrounded by heights than any others in this quarter. There are streamlets in both, whose banks are not marshy. As yet there are only a few scattered cottages in these valleys. The locality of Chelston, a hamlet about a mile west of Torquay, has been pointed out as one of the most salubrious spots in this neighbourhood. It is situated on the side of a hill, sloping to the east and south.

The *climate* of this part of Devonshire, and, in particular, of the cove of Torquay, is considered by most persons who have resided for some time in different places on the south and south-west coasts of England, as one of the mildest and most steady they have any where met with in that quarter; and thus they so far corroborate the opinion on which the high reputation of Torquay, as a good winter residence for invalids, is founded. But observations sufficient to enable us to characterize the climate with precision, and to compare it with that of other places, are still wanting. The only data of which we can avail ourselves in attempting to estimate the mean temperature of the place,

and its daily and monthly changes, are, 1. The monthly averages of observations made during the winter of 1827-28, and inserted in the appendix to Dr Clark's work "On the Influence of Climate." 2. The results of similar observations made during the winters of 1829, 1830, and 1831, by Mr Blewitt, and published in his "Panorama of Torquay," (1832.) 3. A few observations of the temperature of springs in the vicinity. 4. A journal of the temperature at noon, kept during the winter 1832-33.

I. With regard to the *annual mean temperature* deducible from these data, it can be but a mere approximation to the truth to which we can attain, as the observations from which the yearly temperature must be calculated were made only during the winter and spring months. The mean of the observations recorded in Dr Clark's work is $48^{\circ}.44$. But as it is not stated at what *hour* the thermometer was observed, we cannot estimate the annual mean from them. Mr Blewitt's observations give for the mean temperature of six months, from November till April inclusive,

In 1829-30,	-	$46^{\circ}.03$	} Mean, $46^{\circ}.43$.
In 1830-31,	-	$46^{\circ}.13$	
In 1831-32,	-	$47^{\circ}.15$	

Now, as these means were deduced from observations made at 8 A. M., and 2 P. M., they must give a result higher than the true mean by about half a degree (.55).^{*} This reduces the mean temperature of the six cold months to $45^{\circ}.88$. If we compare this with the observed mean temperatures of the same season, and of the whole year at other places in the same quarter, (at Penzance, for instance, where good observations have been made, and where the winter temperature is $46^{\circ}.33$, the annual, $52^{\circ}.16$,) we obtain $51^{\circ}.65$ as the mean temperature of Torquay. The observations formerly alluded to of the temperature of the springs around Torquay, give 52° as that of the most stationary. None were found under 50° , and none above 52° , and the average of all the observations was $50^{\circ}.93$.

The daily observations made at noon during the season 1832-33, gave the following monthly means. November, $52^{\circ}.38$; December, $50^{\circ}.24$; January, $44^{\circ}.40$; February, $49^{\circ}.28$; March, $46^{\circ}.02$.

The temperature at noon is found to be about two degrees and a-half above the mean of the day. From the above numbers, reduced according to this ratio, we obtain for the true monthly means: November, $49^{\circ}.87$; December, $47^{\circ}.73$; January, $41^{\circ}.89$; February, $46^{\circ}.77$; March, $43^{\circ}.51$; and for the mean of the

^{*} Brewster on the Results of the Leith-Fort Hourly Observations. Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin. 1826.

season, $45^{\circ}.97$. This, compared with the Penzance results, gives $51^{\circ}.77$ as the annual mean. It is not unlikely, therefore, that $51^{\circ}.70$ is very nearly the mean temperature of Torquay.*

II. *Daily Range of Temperature*.—The results deducible from the observations contained in Dr Clark's work, "On the Influence of Climate," and those by Mr Blewitt, are arranged in the following table :—

November.		December.		January.		February.		March.		April.	
Mean.	Max.	Mean.	Max.	Mean.	Max.	Mean.	Max.	Mean.	Max.	Mean.	Max.
1827-28,	5° 10°	5°	12°	5°	13°	6°	16°	8°	13°	11°	12°
1829-30,	5 25	4	15	3	11	5	12	8	19	7	26
1830-31,	4 14	5	12	3	14	4	8	6	18	7	18
1831-32,	5 20	4	9	1	11	1	13	6	14	8	16

Hence it appears, that the mean daily range is little more than 4° .

III. *Monthly Range of Temperature*.—The observations above referred to give the following results under this head :—

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March.	April.	Mean.
1827-28,	29°	18°	25°	29°	23°	26°	25°
1829-30,	26	24	17	34	30	36	28
1830-31,	26	29	22	31	27	25	26
1831-32,	27	22	20	23	30	31	25

The observations made *at noon* during 1832-33, give the following monthly extremes :—

1832-1833.	Minima.	Maxima.	Range.
November,	$45^{\circ}.5$	$59^{\circ}.5$	$14^{\circ}.0$
December,	46 .0	56 .0	10 .0
January,	39 .5	49 .5	10 .0
February,	44 .0	54 .5	10 .5
March,	40 .5	52 .5	12 .0

IV. *Daily Change of Temperature*.—The mean difference between the temperature of successive days in the cold season, may be stated at about $2^{\circ}.7$. The greatest difference observed at noon in 1832-33, was 6° . The coldest weather of the same season occurred between the 9th and 14th of March, when the lowest temperatures indicated by the register thermometer ranged between 31° and 36° . The temperature at noon was never lower than 41° at this time; but in January it was observed at 39° , which was the minimum of the season at that hour.

* Dr Scully of Torquay has, for several years past, made meteorological observations daily with great care, by means of excellent instruments; but he has not yet calculated their results. To Dr Scully, as also to Dr Denmark, physician to the Fleet, and to Dr Barry, both of Torquay, the author has to acknowledge himself indebted for some of the facts mentioned in this paper.

It is always satisfactory to determine *the temperatures of the interior of houses* in places resorted to by invalids. In this view, the following results of daily observations of the temperature of a bed-room at 7 A. M., in which no fire was kept, may be found interesting. They form good indications of the temperature to which the residents are generally exposed. The first of the two following tables contains the weekly means of these observations in each month, and the second the greatest differences between the temperatures of successive days in each week.

1832-1833.	1st Week.	2d Week.	3d Week.	4th Week.	Mean.
November,	53°.43	49°.62	51°.52	52°.37	51°.73
December,	50 .07	50 .00	49 .93	49 .50	49 .87
January,	45 .21	46 .84	43 .06	42 .81	44 .84
February,	49 .85	50 .92	45 .92	46 .78	48 .36
March,	48 .14	41 .12	45 .06	42 .07	44 .09

1832-1833.	1st Week.	2d Week.	3d Week.	4th Week.
November,	5°.5	4°.	2°.7	2°.
December,	5	5	5 .5	5
January,	3	2	1	3 .5
February,	4	2	4 .5	2 .5
March,	3 .5	6	3	2

The humidity of the air in this quarter seems to be less than, from the character of its locality, one might expect. It is observed, that iron exposed to the atmosphere without covering does not oxidate so quickly as elsewhere. Fog is rarely seen. It appeared on two days only during the winter 1832-33; and daily observations of the dew-point during the same season shewed that the air is seldom saturated with moisture, and that even in December and January it is sometimes very dry. It is not known that any series of hygrometrical observations has been made at Torquay, excepting that just alluded to. They were made with care; but on account of the hygrometer having been placed unavoidably in a situation where it was likely to be surrounded by air drier than the circumambient atmosphere, and where it was exposed occasionally to a reflection of the sun's rays from a whitened wall thirty feet distant, it is not presumed to deduce from them any definite conclusions with regard to the real average degree of moisture of this climate. The general results, however, may be stated. The observations were made at noon by means of Jones's thermometrical hygrometer. In the following table the monthly means only of the temperature of the air and of the dew-point at noon are given.

1832-1833.	Temperature of		Difference.
	Air at Noon.	Dew-point.	
November,	52°.38	43°.80	8°.58
December,	50 .24	42 .52	7 .72
January,	44 .40	36 .59	7 .81
February,	49 .28	40 .67	8 .61
March,	46 .02	34 .76	11 .26

After making allowance for the observations having been made at an hour when the air is generally drier than at any other, and also for the false indications to which the construction and position of the instrument may have given rise,* there still seems to be reason for supposing that there is less moisture generally present in the atmosphere of Torquay than in that of many other parts of Britain. The mean difference between the temperatures of the air and the dew-point at London, during the same five months which furnished the observations at Torquay, is only 3°.57, according to the results obtained by Mr Daniell in 1820-22.†

The quantity of rain which annually falls at Torquay has not yet been ascertained. And, indeed, to obtain a true measure of it will be found difficult; for there are very few positions within the cove where a guage could be placed so that it might, at once, be conveniently examined, and be beyond the shelter of houses, woods, and hills. Perhaps the least objectionable situation is at the end of the pier. Rain fell on seventy-four days, in 1832-3, from November to March inclusive; on fifty-two of these heavily; and on three days snow fell, but was immediately dissolved. The following are the numbers of the wet days in each month: in November, twenty; December, seventeen; January, ten; February, twenty; March, seventeen. It is an opinion generally held amongst the residents, that less rain falls at Torquay than in other parts of South Devon; and some persons of intelligence, and accustomed to observation, state that they have frequently seen large rain-clouds, coming from the south, divide before reaching Torbay, one part going up the valley of the Dart, the other passing on towards the valley of the Teign, thus avoiding Torquay altogether. Indeed, its situation, mid-

* The instrument used in the above observations, gives indications pretty nearly corresponding to those obtained by Dalton's method. But some such hygrometers have been found by Mr Adie (Edinburgh Journal of Science, 1828,) to give the temperature of the dew-point nearly four degrees below that indicated by Dalton's method. From some trials to which the one used at Torquay has been subjected, it appears probable that in general its indications are not more than one degree below the true dew-point. Nevertheless, the circumstance of its not being perfectly accurate, taken along with the objectionable position of the instrument, must to a certain extent diminish the value of the observations.

† Daniell's Meteorological Essays.

way between these two river-courses, is supposed by many to contribute greatly to the dryness of the locality. But this idea, as well as that which imputes a similar effect to the limestone rocks (with their nearly vertical strata,) on which the town is built, seems to require more distinct proof than has yet been adduced.

No register of *the direction of the wind* has been published. It is generally supposed, however, that, in all seasons, the wind blows from the west and south for a longer time than from the east and north. But it was otherwise during the winter 1832-33, when on seventy-three days only the wind blew from points between S. E. and W., and on seventy-eight days from those between E. and N. W., both inclusive. These winds were distributed amongst the several months in the following proportions.

1832, 1833.	Wind.		Days of strong gales.
	S. E. to W.	E. to N. W.	
November,	17 days	13 days	12
December,	19	12	10
January,	7	24	3
February,	20	8	12
March,	10	21	3

By the “ days of strong gales” in the above table, are meant those on which, irrespective altogether of the temperature, a delicate invalid could not have gone abroad with comfort. The most boisterous gales were from the south-west. One of these (on the 19th and 20th of February,) was severely felt, and proved most destructive all along the south and west coasts of England; but Torquay sustained little damage. The blasting of the east wind, so remarkably baneful to vegetation in spring on the north-east coasts of Britain, is sometimes experienced here; and its peculiar chilling effect is sensibly felt, although not to the same degree as in Scotland. The greater part of the town, however, is well sheltered from its direct action.

In estimating the advantages which this locality possesses as a place of residence for invalids, the power of the sun’s rays, and the concentration of their effect within the cove by the sides of the bounding hills, must be taken into account. Thermometrical indications can give no just idea of the importance of these to the invalid. But it is evident that they tend to produce a local atmosphere in which he may take exercise out of doors, with safety and comfort, on many more days than he could, in the same season, in other places less favourably circumstanced.

It may be proper to add here a note of the number of days in each month of the season 1832-33 on which it appeared to the

writer that an invalid, able for some degree of exercise, and not in the last stage of pulmonary disease, might have taken foot or horse exercise without injury. November, twelve; December, sixteen; January, twelve; February, eight; March, thirteen.

The population of the parish of Tormohun in 1831, was, according to the census, 3582. Of these there were probably about 2500 resident in Torquay. The number has been increased since 1831, but not considerably. The 3582 individuals composed 629 families, of which 28 were engaged in agriculture, 282 in trade and manufacture, 316 consisted of the wealthy residents and of visitors. There were 1583 males, and 1999 females. Of the adult male population there were, professional men and merchants, 64, agricultural labourers, 36, general labourers, 45, masons, 24, carpenters, 16, sailors, 10, &c.

The population of the parish has been more than quadrupled within the last thirty years. The increase has been chiefly in Torquay since about 1810. There were 1925 inhabitants in 1821. The annual number of baptisms varied from 41 to 64 between 1813 and 1820, and from 67 to 107 between 1820 and 1830; within the latter period there were from 12 to 35 marriages annually. During eighteen years preceding 1830 there were 582 burials within the parish, of which 47 were of persons above 80 years of age, and 5 above 90. One individual was 95. Of the same number, 93 were of strangers. But this does not indicate the total number of invalids who have died at Torquay, as the bodies of many are removed for interment to the places of their former residence. The largest number interred in a single year was 11, (in 1821.) Of 40 strangers interred in Tor burial-ground, 22 were males between the ages of 15 and 43, and 18 females between 17 and 44. The average of their ages is 28. In 1821, the total mortality was to the population in the ratio of 1 to 48.5, and in 1830, 1 to 64.25.*

That fair deductions may be drawn from the above statements, it is proper to remark that drunkenness is said to be a very prevalent vice amongst the labouring classes, and that the domestic servants (who are very numerous) too frequently live in habits of luxurious indulgence and inaction. There is no other peculiarity in the mode of life of the inhabitants which seem to demand notice here.

Torquay is said to be "wholly exempt from endemic diseases; intermittent fevers, and the severe forms of typhus are unknown; low nervous and continued fevers are rare and seldom fatal; and

* Most of the above facts were obtained, through the kind attention of the Rev. Mr Gee, the present incumbent of the parish, from an abstract of the parochial registers.

inflammatory affections are comparatively mild.”* Such is the universal testimony of the present medical residents, some of whom have practised in Torquay for many years past.

With regard to the sanatory effect of the climate on invalids ; it is a general remark and complaint that so large a proportion come to the place too late for the favourable action of any remedial measure, that its restorative influence is very seldom fairly tried. But several persons from distant parts of England and Scotland, affected with pulmonary disease, are to be found resident here, who state that in no place do they spend the winter so comfortably as at Torquay ; and others may be found who have been restored to perfect health since coming hither, after having spent years in pain and debility. Chronic bronchitis and rheumatism, in particular, are remarkably alleviated during a residence in Torquay. Most of the medical practitioners are of opinion that there is less tendency here to pleuritic affections in the last stage of phthisis, than is usual in colder climates ; so that in the fatal cases there is generally very little suffering. It is worthy of remark that many persons (even those who otherwise are in health) after a few weeks or months’ residence in Torquay, become subject to slight conjunctival ophthalmia.

The state of the town with regard to its buildings, roads, &c. demands the attention of the medical topographer, no less than many of the other points that have already been adverted to. Most of the houses are placed in juxtaposition, and arranged in streets, rows, and terraces, around the shores of the cove, and on the declivity of the hills ; but many (between 30 and 40) are built as villas, and scattered over the rising grounds, each being surrounded by its shrubbery, which is often most tastefully disposed. Exclusive of the villas, there are about 115 houses in Torquay, possessing accommodations sufficient for families of respectability, nearly one-half of which may be hired, in whole or in part, furnished or unfurnished, for the season. Forty-six of these houses are situated along the shores of the cove, on the same level as the surfaces of the quays ; from the edges of which most of them are distant about 50 feet. The largest and best houses are in High Terrace, Beacon Terrace, Park Street, Chapel Terrace, Low Terrace, and Vaughan Parade ; but those situated most advantageously for allowing the inmates to obtain all the benefits of the local climate are in Old Quay, Abbey Place, and Vaughan Parade ; which situations, perhaps, deserve preference in the order in which they are here arranged. Their fronts have exposures varying from south to south-east. Most of the houses are substantially built of the limestone of the sur-

* Blewitt’s “ Panorama of Torquay,” an excellent local guide.

rounding hills, and faced with cement. They are roofed with clay-slate, and generally are well arranged interiorly. All the newer houses are fitted up in the best style; the furniture of the lodging-houses is in general very good. The streets are Macadamized; the foot-paths formed, in part, of small stones closely set together, and in part, of flags of limestone; so that within the town, when rain is not actually falling, one may at all times walk distances of several hundred yards without wetting the feet. The roads in the neighbourhood are generally very good; and near the town, are provided with foot-paths. There are pleasant walks in several directions. One in particular, along the southern brow of Waldon Hill, through an old plantation, on the summit of a precipitous declivity overhanging the sea, is deservedly much valued by the residents on account of its good shelter and magnificent view. But a flight of more than 100 steps, by which alone it can be approached from the town, precludes the feeble invalid from availing himself of its benefits. It is with great justice that Dr Clark remarks, "that there is scarcely a wind that blows, from which the invalid will not be able to find a shelter for exercise either on foot or horseback," in the vicinity of Torquay. *

The town does not possess much commerce, but generally five or six coasting-vessels, and a few brigs employed in the Newfoundland trade, are seen in the harbour. Occasionally, the sound of the carpenter's hammer, and the smoke of the burning gorse used in the process of ship-caulking, are sources of annoyance to invalids inhabiting houses near the quays.

There are two chapels of ease to the Parish Church of Tormohun in Torquay; and meeting-houses for the Baptists and Methodists. About a mile from the town, there is a Roman Catholic Chapel. Two circulating libraries, a book society, and a good news-room exist; and there are large public rooms where meetings of the religious and charitable associations of the town, as well as assemblies and concerts, are occasionally held. A commodious set of baths is not wanting. The hotels are good; the markets well supplied. A mail is dispatched daily to London, and there are two coaches every day to and from Exeter.

During the summer, communication with Plymouth and Portsmouth is afforded twice a week by a steamer, having excellent accommodations for passengers.

Leith, 22d July 1833.

* "On the Influence of Climate," p. 50.

